



1927 - 80th Anniversary - 2007

PRESS RELEASE

Celebration of the 80th Anniversary of the Inter-American Children's Institute, a specialized organization of the Organization of American States, responsible for the promotion and protection of children's rights in the region through a family and community-based approach.



On 9 June, 1927, what was then called the "International American Institute for Child Protection" was established with the endorsement of ten countries in the Americas, thus turning into a reality the initiative submitted in 1919 by the eminent Uruguayan paediatrician Professor Luis Morquio, M.D., who implemented this pioneering venture together with a group of experts in the Americas concerned about child-related issues. In recognition to his leadership he was appointed as the first Director General of the Institute until his demise in 1935. In 1949 the Institute became part of the Organization of American States (OAS) as an Inter-American Specialized Organization, and in 1957 its name was replaced by "Inter-American Children's Institute". Following an Agreement signed in 1968 with the Uruguayan Government its headquarters were established in Montevideo.

During its 80-year life the Institute permanently searched for the integral approach that child-related issues require. Thus, it became a precursor of social paediatrics through the inclusion of children and their immediate environment, the family. It was also a pioneer in the design of Child Codes by drafting or having incidence on the relevant regulatory frameworks in the region, as well as on the development and promotion of Inter-American Conventions; the training of human resources for Justice Administration; the attention to such issues as Birth Registration and children's rights to an identity and citizenship; child participation; family promotion and strengthening; the Strengthening of Governance within the Inter-American System for the Promotion and Protection of Children's Human Rights; the integrating approach for children with Different Capabilities; the study of the social aspects of Poverty and Marginalization; Adoption; Drug-Addiction Prevention, including Workshops with the participation of children and parents; the creation of Information Systems, including the most important Inter-American Child and Family Information Network in the Inter-American System, and a System for Monitoring Right Enforcement; the approach to such issues as Child Pornography in the Internet, Child Commercial Sexual

Exploitation, Trafficking, Migration, and International Abduction; Maltreatment, Abuse, and Violence; Child Labour and child situation in Armed Conflicts. It has also provided technical cooperation and training to Member States through the design of Regulatory Prototypes and Public Policies on matters of its competence, as well as a Prototype of National Child System. Likewise, it designed and prepared a teaching kit formed by videotapes, books, and videogames (which may be found in its Web page: www.iin.oea.org), for the promotion and dissemination of the rights provided for in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The IIN has established strategic alliances with institutions at regional and international level pursuant to its mandates to the recommendations adopted by the OAS General Assembly and Permanent Council, the Summits of the Americas, the IIN Directing Council, and the Pan American Child Congress.

The IIN cooperates with the governments of Member States and simultaneously with other agencies within the Inter-American System, with other international institutions, and with civil society entities for developing activities and technical instruments contributing to the integral protection of children in the region through a family and community-based approach, and to the promotion of social responsibility.

The IIN governing organs are: the Pan American Child Congress, an Inter-American Meeting at ministerial level; the Directing Council composed of the delegates of Member States and currently chaired by its President, Ms. Sara Oviedo from Ecuador and its Vice President, Ms. Kirsys Fernández de Valenzuela from the Dominican Republic for the 2006-2008 term of office, and the IIN Office that institutionally reports to the OAS Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Albert Ramdin.

The Office of the Director General of the Institute is presently headed by Ms. María de los Dolores Aguilar Marmolejo from Mexico, appointed for such purpose by the OAS Secretary General, Dr. José Miguel Insulza from a three-candidate list elected during the 81st Regular Meeting of the Directing Council held in Montevideo in November, 2006.